

Jizzakh State Pedagogical Institute



**Journal of Preschool
Education**

*The faculty of pre-school
education*

Techniques and strategies to improve primary school students' reading skills.

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Abstract: To understand the passage being read one has to undergo the complex cognitive processes that are necessary to be embedded with reading activity to give the readers to understand the meaning of the material they are reading. At school the students usually get the main source of knowledge from texts so comprehending what they read is highly important when they move from one class to another. Practicing reading is conventionally based on teacher's instructions and guidance by reading texts in textbooks and organizing answer-question talk on accordance with the content of the reading material. (Smagorinsky, 2001; Toste, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2013). Bu it is not enough to be an effective reader what it means that students have to develop effective reading skills that could improve their ability to access complex content delivered in textbooks to be successful in general education classrooms. The reason is that it is expected from today's youth to raise their literacy skills to higher level compared to the past generations to meet the requirements of the business environment.

Key words: reading comprehension, literacy skill, strategic instruction, cognitive development, reading strategies.

There are some productive strategies for reading comprehension that include predicting the content, analyzing the text structure, identifying the main idea, and constructing summarizations. Understanding the main idea and identifying details of a text is basic ability that learners should develop for successful reading comprehension and is generally considered a prerequisite for higher-level strategies (Watson, Gable, Gear & Hughes, 2012). Cognitive strategy training with regard of reading is one of the effective way to develop the students' meta-cognitive comprehension skills. What the idea refers to is that the students will be able to comprehend the information about the content-area text materials when

they are thoroughly explained how and when to process it effectively. Nevertheless, the strategic instruction model should involve teaching students a set of certain strategies in order to obtain knowledge in more active way and improve their working skills. (Hagaman & Reid, 2008).

The strategic instruction model is an approach that focuses on teaching reader how to learn, learn how to put what he/she learns during reading into practice, and how to deal with reading difficulties and problems that arise while digesting the information (Deshler & Lenz, 1989; Schumaker, Deshler & Ellis, 1986).

Reading is one of the main language skills that require making inferences and understanding the details in written materials, and it is expected that it will be acquired by pupils at primary school. In fact, reading comprehension is seen at the center of many school subjects as it plays a major role in the process of cognitive development. Certain character describes good readers who come into prominence in the reading comprehension process. Good readers are characterized with the features that

- they are active in the reading process, have related to the text with purpose
- analyze the text and make some predictions about the text before reading
- elicit the meanings of the words from the context
- use prior knowledge and check on its accuracy
- re-construct the meaning
- think about the characters and events in fictional texts and tend to summarize them
- consider reading to be a productive skill.

Reading comprehension is a complex process and it includes the reader's knowledge of word stock, the interaction with the text and their use of comprehension strategies. The productive use of reading comprehension strategies is closely connected with an effective reading process. So, teaching reading should also include teaching of cognitive strategies since they can contribute. The students

who encounter difficulties in reading comprehension can take advantages of those strategies to understand the text better.

Reading strategies can be divided into three distinctive categories: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading strategies. Pre-reading strategies involve preparing a reading plan, predicting the topic using the first sentences of the paragraph, and guessing the meaning from the main titles, subtitles and visual elements, which help to activate prior knowledge and decide where to focus, and determine reading speed.

While-reading strategies enable the students to make connections between paragraphs, taking notes on significant points, re-reading when attention is lost, underlining significant points, using a dictionary when the meanings cannot be elicited from the context, re-reading the parts that are difficult to understand, utilizing pictures, tables and diagrams, using textual clues, re-analyzing when conflicting information is encountered, and establishing connections between prior knowledge and new ones. The post-reading stage involves a number of other strategies, namely, summarizing the text, checking whether the reading goals are achieved or not, checking previous predictions, evaluating the main ideas of the text critically, taking notes for future reference, answering the questions which have been prepared, expressing the main ideas of text. All the stages above help the readers to comprehend the material they are reading.

However, there are so many factors to consider when it comes to teaching and learning reading phonics, fluency, comprehension – the list goes on and on. And if you teach reading, you already know all of those above. And as a teacher you have probably already established a pretty solid arsenal of strategies for your students. But in order to collectively boost literacy for all of our little learners, a few reading strategies will be suggested that have been proved to be effective in reading classes.

Phonics and fluency truly go hand in hand and they are prerequisites to be developed to make the learners effective readers. So they should be embedded in

reading activities as the more fluent the readers are the better they will understand and reading will be fun not a tedious activity.

Fluency can be identified as enabling the students to decode text and read with accuracy, speed and proper expression. Most importantly, it is the ability to read the text easily without being stuck over words or sounding choppy and awkward.

In order to comprehend the meaning the kids should be able to become fluent readers. If they are in struggle to pronounce or decode words they can not concentrate their mind to what they are reading and loose their attention span to understand the meaning.

Phonics is often thought of as a precursor to fluency. It deals with beginning readers understanding the correspondence between letters and sounds. Fluent readers often rely on their knowledge of letter-sound relationships to decode words.

Without phonics, it's pretty tough to become a fluent reader. By teaching phonics while working on fluency, your students have the opportunity to grow exponentially as readers.

Perfectly decorated classroom arise amazing feeling in the little readers with its catchy and interesting atmosphere. Everything should be in its place and perfectly organized – until the kids get there, of course. But when it comes to room décor, it shouldn't just be pretty – it should be meaningful. You can make your classroom décor a powerful part of your reading curriculum by displaying strategies around the room. Different posts to suggest how to improve reading should be attached on the walls which will be ubiquitous reminders. Displaying and explicitly teaching strategies that your students can use while reading the teacher can foster those strategies in their readers' mind.

When it comes enhance the readers' reading comprehension, graphic organizers are an incredibly helpful reading strategy and tool to promote this vital aspect of becoming proficient readers.

In the classroom undoubtedly there are diverse students each of whom learns and absorb information in different ways. Graphic organizers can be used to address a variety of learning modalities at the same time while instruction. Graphic organizers allow students to process information both visually and spatially which encourages them to internalize the material. This feature of graphic organizers enables students to quite literally see the connections in what they are reading.

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